

By: Van de Putte, et al.

S.B. No. 898

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the mental health program for veterans.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 1001.071, Health and Safety Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 1001.071. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT RELATED TO HEALTH CARE. The department is responsible for administering human services programs regarding the public health, including:

(1) implementing the state's public health care delivery programs under the authority of the department;

(2) administering state health facilities, hospitals, and health care systems;

(3) developing and providing health care services, as directed by law;

(4) providing for the prevention and control of communicable diseases;

(5) providing public education on health-related matters, as directed by law;

(6) compiling and reporting health-related information, as directed by law;

(7) acting as the lead agency for implementation of state policies regarding the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and administering programs

1 related to the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired
2 immunodeficiency syndrome;

3 (8) investigating the causes of injuries and methods
4 of prevention;

5 (9) administering a grant program to provide
6 appropriated money to counties, municipalities, public health
7 districts, and other political subdivisions for their use to
8 provide or pay for essential public health services;

9 (10) administering the registration of vital
10 statistics;

11 (11) licensing, inspecting, and enforcing regulations
12 regarding health facilities, other than long-term care facilities
13 regulated by the Department of Aging and Disability Services;

14 (12) implementing established standards and
15 procedures for the management and control of sanitation and for
16 health protection measures;

17 (13) enforcing regulations regarding radioactive
18 materials;

19 (14) enforcing regulations regarding food, bottled
20 and vended drinking water, drugs, cosmetics, and health devices;

21 (15) enforcing regulations regarding food service
22 establishments, retail food stores, mobile food units, and roadside
23 food vendors; ~~and~~

24 (16) enforcing regulations controlling hazardous
25 substances in households and workplaces; and

26 (17) implementing a mental health program for
27 veterans.

1 SECTION 2. Chapter 1001, Health and Safety Code, is amended
2 by adding Subchapter H to read as follows:

3 SUBCHAPTER H. MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

4 Sec. 1001.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

5 (1) "Peer" means a person who is a veteran or a
6 veteran's family member.

7 (2) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:

8 (A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or
9 marine corps of the United States;

10 (B) the state military forces as defined by
11 Section 431.001, Government Code; or

12 (C) an auxiliary service of one of those branches
13 of the armed forces.

14 (3) "Volunteer coordinator" means a person who
15 recruits and retains veterans, peers, and volunteers to participate
16 in the mental health program for veterans and related activities.

17 Sec. 1001.202. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The
18 department shall develop a mental health intervention program for
19 veterans. The program must include:

20 (1) peer-to-peer counseling;

21 (2) access to licensed mental health professionals for
22 volunteer coordinators and peers;

23 (3) training approved by the department for peers;

24 (4) technical assistance for volunteer coordinators
25 and peers;

26 (5) grants to regional and local organizations
27 providing services under this subchapter;

1 (6) recruitment, retention, and screening of
2 community-based therapists;

3 (7) suicide prevention training for volunteer
4 coordinators and peers; and

5 (8) veteran jail diversion services, including
6 veterans courts.

7 (b) The department shall solicit and ensure that
8 specialized training is provided to persons who are peers and who
9 want to provide peer-to-peer counseling or other peer-to-peer
10 services under the program.

11 (c) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement
12 this subchapter.

13 Sec. 1001.203. GRANTS. (a) The department shall establish
14 a grant program through which the department may award grants to
15 regional and local organizations for the delivery of programs or
16 services described by this subchapter.

17 (b) A grant awarded under this section must:

18 (1) emphasize direct services to veterans provided by
19 peers;

20 (2) leverage additional local resources to provide
21 funding for programs or services for veterans; and

22 (3) increase the capacity of the mental health program
23 for veterans.

24 (c) A grant awarded under this section may not be used to
25 supplant existing expenditures associated with programs or
26 services within the department.

27 Sec. 1001.204. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of

1 each year, the department shall submit a report to the governor and
2 the legislature that includes:

3 (1) the number of veterans who received services
4 through the mental health program for veterans;

5 (2) the number of peers and volunteer coordinators
6 trained;

7 (3) a summary of the grants awarded and services
8 provided through those grants;

9 (4) an evaluation of the services provided under this
10 subchapter; and

11 (5) recommendations for program improvements.

12 SECTION 3. Section 1001.076, Health and Safety Code, is
13 repealed.

14 SECTION 4. Not later than January 1, 2014, the Department of
15 State Health Services shall modify the mental health intervention
16 program for veterans as required by Subchapter H, Chapter 1001,
17 Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

18 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.